

C O P Y
OF A²
L E T T E R

To a MEMBER of
The *New (or Pretended)* Synod,
From a MEMBER of
The *Associate Kirk-Session* of *Perth*.

To which is added, by the AUTHOR,

An APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

An *ANSWER* to several *Objections* which
are ordinarily made on this Subject.



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C O P Y

O F A

L E T T E R

T O

A *MEMBER* of the *New* (or
Pretended) Synod, &c.

AS I did not judge it expedient at present to mention the Reverend Minister's Name to whom the following Letter was wrote and directed, in Regard, that what I say to him, I may warrantably say to all his Brethren who join with him; so I have likewise forbore to mention my own Name, tho' I adhere to my Subscription of the said Letter. Also, the Man, and his Communications are known: Neither is it omitted for Fear of Censure, but to discover, that I am not so fond to be seen in Print, as some may be ready to think. But, if the said Reverend Minister, to whom this Letter was sent and directed, think fit to publish the subscribed Copy of this Letter, with his (or his Brethrens) Answer to the same, then, for my Part, he is welcome. I am not ashamed, nor afraid, to own it; for I endeavoured (thro' Grace) to count the Cost before ever I put Pen to Paper on this Head. Neither needs this be thought rash, in

Regard it is now near a Month since the following Letter was sent to the said Reverend Minister, of which I have received no Answer.

Follows a *Genuine Copy* of the LETTER.

Rev. and dear Sir,

I Am sorry our Contentions are growing so sharp, that in all Appearance we are departing asunder one from another (a); yea, there seems to be little Prospect, or Probability, of our meeting in *Judgment*, while sojourning here; Matters being carried on in such a *violent and disorderly Manner*, by those you join with. And tho' it is to be feared, that any Thing I say, will have little Weight, considering how little Regard is paid by those you join with, to that which your Reverend and learned Fathers and Brethren have said on the Head; their Words and Writ being accounted, by your Party, as *idle Tales*, if not worse: Yet as I desire to be ready always to give a Reason to every one that asketh me (b), so I desire likewise, in my Station, to say to *Archippus*, or to our Reverend Ministers, *Take heed to the Ministry which you have received of the Lord, that you fulfil it*, Col. iv. 17. So your late Servant having acquainted me, that you was desirous I should write my Mind to you anent our present Difference or Situation; I shall freely and ingeniously give you my Mind thereanent.

As *first*, With respect to the Synod's Sentence, anent the religious Clause of some Burgeess-oaths, I look upon it as *rash and unguarded*; yea, tho' the *Matter and Design* thereof were good, yet I would think it my Duty to testify against the *violent Manner* of carrying on the said Sentence and Act, as a manifest Breach of good Rules and Order in the Church, *Phil. ii. 3. Let nothing be done through Strife or Vain-glory; but, in Lowliness of Mind, let each esteem another better than themselves.* As also contrary unto the Barrier Acts (c).

Also

(a) *Acts* xv. 39.

(b) *1 Peter* iii. 15.

(c) *Assembly at Edinburgh*, August 30. 1639. *Sess. 23. Anent advising with Synods and Presbyteries, before Determination in Novations.*
 " The General Assembly considering, that the intended Reformation
 " being

Also I think it my Duty, to testify against their refusing to allow their said Sentence and Act to be duly and timeously weighed, in the *Balance of the Sanctuary*, by Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions. I say, I look upon this Refusal as smelling Rank of a lordly Dominion over your Brethren, the Thing being *new*, and of *doubtful Disputation*, even among the most zealous, learned, and experienced Members of the said Synod (d). And if those
you

“ being recovered, may be established, ordains, That no Novation, which may disturb the Peace of the Church, and make Division, be suddenly proponed and enacted : But so as the Motion be first communicate to the several Synods, Presbyteries and Kirks, that the Matter may be approved by all at Home, and Commissioners may come well prepared, unanimously to conclude a solid Deliberation upon these Points in the General Assembly.”

Assembly at St. Andrews and Edin. Aug. 6. 1641. Sess. 14. Anent Novations.

“ Since it hath pleased God to vouchsafe the Liberty of yearly General Assemblies, it is ordained, according to the Acts of the Assembly at *Edinburgh* 1639, and at *Aberdeen* 1640, That no Novation in Doctrine, Worship or Government be brought in, or practised in this Kirk, unless it be first propounded, examined and allowed in the General Assembly ; and that Transgressors in this Kind, be censured by Presbyteries and Synods.”

Also, contrary unto the *Confession of Faith*, Chap. III. Sect. 4. “ All Synods and Councils since the Apostles Times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred : Therefore they are not to be made the Rule of Faith and Practice, but to be used as an Help in both.”

(d) How perplexing and difficult must this then be to the weak of the Flock, and contrary unto *Rom. xiv. 1. Him that is weak in the Faith, receive you ; but not to doubtful Disputations.* I say, has not the rash and hasty Making and Pushing of this Act (as a Term of Christian Communion) a direct Tendency to rack, or distract the Minds of many of the Lord's People, or involve them in the Guilt of implicate Faith, and blind Obedience, or Submission. I am not speaking without Book on this Head : For I was an Ear-witness, where I heard the above Act (*Materially and publickly*) made a Term of Christian Communion, and that even before ever the Synod answered the Reasons of Protest against the said Act. Yea, this was delivered with the first publick Notes that ever I heard that Reverend and Worthy Minister deliver from our Pulpit on that Head ; declaring, (to this Purpose) That if we saw not the Sinfulness of the religious Clause in that Oath, or were not singly lying open for Light, so as to see the same to be sinful, then we were unworthy, or unfit for approaching unto the Lord's Table. I make no Doubt of his Design being good : Also, it is with Grief of Heart that I am obliged thus to withstand the said Reverend and experienc'd Minister

you join with continue to vindicate their above Refusal, then we have no such approved Custom in the Church of *Scotland* in her purest Times, 1 *Cor.* xi. 16. *But if any Man seem to be contentious, we have no such Custom, neither the Churches of God.*

Secondly, As I look upon the said Act to be *rash* and *unguarded*, so I look upon the late separating and renting of the *Associate Synod*, which was done by those you join with, to be much more *rash* and *unwarrantable*.

I make no doubt of their Design, and yours, being good; neither am I so uncharitable as to think, that you, or your Brethren, would *knowingly do Evil that Good might come.*

But we may charitably think, that *Uzza* had as good a De-

Minister of Jesus Christ. But if Ministers (or Matters) be allowed to go on at this Rate, then we may have new Terms of Communion every Day, and from every Pulpit, without the Advice or Consent either of Synod, Presbyteries or Kirk-sessions. And if this be agreeable, (especially with respect to Matters of doubtful Disputation) either unto the Word of God, or our Presbyterian Principles and Constitution, then I have lost my Skill (and Understanding) of both. And whatever high Pretences of Zeal some are making on this Head, yet I can instruct (that, in some Respects) they are but *straining at Gnats, and swallowing Camels*, with Respect to Sins that are (and have been) open and manifest, which he that runs may read.

N. B. I have tried private Conversations, yea Sessional Petitions, Representations and Protestations, which have been either smothered, or rejected, or unanswered, before I took this Step. And, durst I hold my Peace, or could I get myself duly exonerated, by sighing in secret, no Man should hear my Voice, or see my Writ in this Manner. As also, I think it my Duty to testify against these Reverend Brethren, who are now practically saying *Amen* to the above new Term of Communion: Yea, how affecting, and afflicting, is it to see and hear some Ministers so imprudent, (or cruel) as to feed, (or propose to feed) Babes with strong Mens Meat, by mingling, (or defiling) their Prayers, Preachings, and Lectures, (or judicial Acts, viz. As Terms of Communion) with Matters of doubtful Disputation, tending also to blast their Brethrens Reputation, and to gender Strifes, rather than godly Edifying, which is in Faith. Tho', I freely own, I have been informed, and instructed by the Writings, which have been emitted on both Sides of the Question, especially those lately emitted by the Reverend Mr. *Ralph Erskine*, and others of his Reverend Brethren; yet, I think, it is very unsuitable to entertain People with such Subjects at solemn Occasions, especially such of them, as have no Call to touch, taste, or handle the said Oath, nor Capacity to understand the same, tho' declared unto them; and yet far more unsuitable, and unseasonable (presently) to make them Terms of Christian Communion.

a Design as any of you; yea, 'tis probable he thought there was no other, or better, Way of holding up the Ark, when the Oxen shook it, than the Way he took; yet its evident that his Deed was rash and disorderly, 1 Chron. xiii. 9, 10. Which should teach Ministers and others to beware of putting to their Hand to the Ark, or Work of God, *in a rash and disorderly Manner*, without Divine or Scripture Warrant; even at a Time when those who bear the Ark may be stumbling.

And this is it which chiefly offends and stumbles me, and many others, with your Party, viz. your not contending and striving after the *due Order* (e), *.

Yea, tho' we had a Firlot of *good Designs*, yet a Bowe of them will not fill a Lippy, so as to justify or extenuate the Guilt of bad Actions, or rash and disorderly Steps. It ought to be duly noticed, that it is only a *disorderly Walk or Traff*, and not a *disorderly Deed or Act*, that will warrant even a withdrawing from any Brother, 2 Thess. iii. 6. And yet far less does it warrant the breaking, or renting asunder, of an orderly and right constituted Synod.

If Matters go on at this Rate, *Divisions* and *Separations* may be endless in a Church, where no Divisions ought to be.

Be it indeed, that the Synod had slipt or erred; Was there no other Way of recovering, but by breaking and renting them asunder? Is it the Way to recover a Man from a Fall, to break his Back, or to tear one of his Legs from another? Were all other Doors and Means of Healing, or Conviction, shut or blockt up?

Yet how melancholy is it to see some, who have been chiefly instrumental in renting the Synod, as above; I say, how melancholy is it, that they seem to glory therein,

as

(e) 1 Chron. xv. 13.

* *Object*. Could there be any Thing more disorderly, than that Vote which was the Occasion of rending the Synod?

Answer. As Matters then stood in the Synod, there could be nothing more suitable for getting the Oath deliberately and judiciously condemned, if sinful; or justified, if lawful; nothing more expedient, or more tending towards healing: I say, there could nothing (in my View) been more fitly, or seasonably proposed for the above Ends, or for preventing forward or Self-willed Ministers from lording it over the Conscience of their Brethren, or People who differed from them.

as some wonderful Appearance, or Work of God, for his Church. Yea, they seem to behave as if their Acts or Decrees were perfect or infallible (f); and think it strange that we run not with them to the same Extremes; speaking evil of us, yea, and accusing us as Apostates, or guilty of Apostasy, as Rejecters and Dispisers of the Command and Authority of the Lord Jesus Christ; merely because we walk not willingly, or implicitly, after their Commandments and Traditions; or have not Freedom, presently or practically, to submit unto, or approve of, their new Constitution and Acts.

I never thought, that your Brethren, or you, would have made so little Bonds of keeping the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace. If you be to strive, why not; yet strive lawfully and fairly. Let us see for this, 2 Tim. ii. 5. *And if a Man also strive for the Masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully.* Let us see also the 14th, and 23d Verses. *Of these Things put them in Remembrance, charging them before the Lord, that they strive not about Words to no Profit, but to the subverting of the Hearers.*—But foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender Strifes.

I look upon it as a noble and commendable Strife, to strive against Sin, to contend earnestly for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints, [to be valiant for the Truth upon the Earth,] Jude iii. Heb. xii. 3, 4. yea, 'tis a Strife and Contention in which we ought to resolve, through Grace, both to live and die, Acts xxiv. 16.

Thirdly, Having read and considered your new Constitution and Acts, I'm sorry I have Ground to say, That your Brethren, with whom you join, and whose Deeds and Acts you either tacitely or verbally approve, have laid many and grievous Things to their Brethrens Charge, which they cannot prove.

As for Instance, Page 10. of the Introduction, Line 4.—they insinuate or assert, That Mr. Erskine's Party do construct or explain our Covenants as binding, or obliging, to Unity, without Truth, or in Opposition to the Testimony of Jesus. Page 11. of the Act, Line 3.----- They say, "That their Brethren were not asking Understanding to discern Judgment, and that there was no Judgment in their Goings; but that the Lord was provoked to
" leave

(f) Or, as the Laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable.

“ leave them unto Counsels of their own.” And, Line 31.— they say, “ They were awfully left of God to behave in open Contradiction to the Name and Nature of a Court of Christ.

Page 20. near the Close, They accuse their said Brethren of assuming to themselves an *arbitrary Power*, and employing it *against Christ*, and for *burying his Truth, Cause and Interest*.

Yea, Page 21. Line 3.— They accuse them, not only as *Subverters*, but *obstinate Subverters*, of that Order which Christ hath commanded in his House.

Yea, which is yet more surprizing, Page 5. Line 27. they accuse them as guilty, not only of *dropping*, but even of *abjuring*, or allowing the Abjuration of, the *whole* of the *Testimony*.

Take the above as a Swatch of that which your Brethren and you have inadvertently, yea uncharitably and unjustly, laid to your Brethrens Charge (g).

How inexcusable and inconsistent are they in judging their Brethren !

Do they not *evidently* and *directly* thereby condemn themselves, while they do the same or like Things which they condemn their Brethren for? *Rom. ii. 1.* As for Instance, Page 5. Line 4.—of the *Introduction*, your Party does grant and assert, that they were averse from the very Thoughts of having the Reasons of Protest entered upon at *Stirling*; for this Cause among others, that if once the Reasons and Answers should be formally entered upon at the Synod, then there was still the less Prospect of *Healing*; consequently, they themselves being Judges, do, by the above Grant and Assertion, judge and condemn themselves for not going into some *healing Overture*, rather than rend asunder and break the Synod, *merely* because the said Reasons and Answers were not *first*, or *formally*, entered upon at *Edinburgh*.

Yea, Page 5. of the *Act*, Line 8.— they accuse their Brethren of voting, in these two Votes, anent referring, by Way of Overture, the Consideration of the said Act to Presbyteries and Kirk-sessions, because they alledged they were Parties in the said Votes: And yet, Page 5. Line 36.

B

of

(g) How unlike is this to the Character of a Citizen of Zion, described, *Psal. xv. 3.* *He that backbiteth not with his Tongue, nor doth Evil to his Neighbour, nor taketh up a Reproach against his Neighbour,*

of the *Introduction*, your Party does assert and affirm, That the above Vote or Votes was a Point *entirely distinct* from what had been before conversed about. Yea tho' it were true, which is evidently a Mistake, that they were Parties in the said two Votes; yet how comes it to pass, that your Party does, in the most *violent* and *disorderly* Manner, sustain themselves, not only *Judges*, but *sole Judges* and *Condemners* of the said two Votes (*h*); tho' they were *directly* and *immediately* Parties by their Protestations against them; yea, this they do without regularly giving in their Reasons of Protest, or waiting the Synod's Answer, in Defence of the Lawfulness and Expediency of the said two Votes.

Yea, which is yet more inconsistent, your Party do's sustain themselves *sole Judges*, and Approvers of their own Answers; yea, *sole Judges* and *Condemners* of their Brethrens Reasons of Protest, as if they were all spoken at *Random*. Are they not *inexcusable*, *inconsistent*, and *unreasonable*, in the above, or like Respects? I say, Are not the above Steps, not only *disorderly*, but *fertile of Disorder*, as certain, also, of your own Party, have said on another Head (*i*).

Yea, I doubt much, if ever the *Parallel*, of such a *groundless* and *rash Separation* was ever heard of, accompanied with such a rash judging, and setting at nought, of those who differ from them, *Rom. xiv. 10. But why dost thou judge thy Brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy Brother? for we shall all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ.*

'Tis to be feared, yea I had almost said, *It seems glaringly evident*, that there's more *Humour*, and *Party* or *precipitant Zeal*, in the above new Constitution and Acts, (something like that in *Luke ix. 49, 50, 54, 55.*) (*k*), than
true

(*h*) Viz. By separating and rending the Synod, as above.

(*i*) This is the disorderly Way that your Party comes HARMONIOUSLY to conclude Matters, p. 11. of the *Introduction* to the Act.

(*k*) *Luke ix. 49. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out Devils in thy Name; and we forbade him, because he followeth not with us.*

Ver. 50. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: For he that is not against us, is for us.

Ver. 54. And when his Disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord,

true Zeal or Matter of Conscience. And whatever Reverence or Respect I owe to you, and your worthy and learned Brethren, whom I love and desire to honour; yet I owe no Reverence nor Respect to *Sin*, wheresoever, or in whomsoever I see it.

Upon the Whole, it seems evident, that the Anger of the Lord hath divided us; we have much Need to seek of the Lord, that he would shew us wherefore he contendeth with us. Certainly there is a *Cause*; doubtless, *Israel* hath sinned, and committed a Trespass in the *accursed Thing*; which ought to cause *great Searchings of Heart among us*. Our Zeal, as well as our Faith, ought not to stand in the *Wisdom of Men, but in the Power, and on the Word of GOD* (1). Also we may see from 1 Cor. xiii. 4. that Charity vaunteth not itself, or is not rash, as in the Margin.

This with my Love and due Respects to you; is from your assured Friend ***** , *whether you think it or not* †.

† Gal. iv. 16, 17. *Am I therefore become your Enemy because I tell you the TRUTH. They ZEALOUSLY affect you, but not WELL.*

Perth, Sept. 1.
1747.

P. S. I hope the above Reasons, viz. 1 Pet. iii. 15. that had Weight, 'th me to write my Mind to you, will have the same with you in favouring me with your Answer.

[Thus far is the above Letter, excepting the Notes.]

Lord, wilt thou that we command Fire to come down from Heaven and consume them, as Elias did?

Ver. 55. *But he turned and rebuked them; and said, Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of.*

(1) 1 Cor. ii. 5.



APPENDIX.

I shall further propose and answer some Objections which are ordinarily made on this Subject.

Object. We wonder you are not wearied, or altogether discouraged, from speaking or meddling further with the Church; more especially with the publick Contentions, or Divisions, that are taking Place therein, considering how much Opposition and Contradiction you have met, or may expect to meet, with therein, both from Saints and Sinners, yea from Ministers.

Answ. None but the Searcher of Hearts, and my own Heart, which knoweth its own Bitterness, knoweth the Weight that is on my Spirit, while writing the above, and thinking on our broken and divided Situation.

And were I not pitied of the Lord, and clear from his Word, that it is my Duty to speak and write as above; I say, were I not pitied of the Lord, and clear as above, my Spirit, which he hath made, would fail before him.

Also, I desire Grace to indure Hardness, as a good Soldier of Jesus Christ, 2 *Tim.* ii. 3. Grace, not to think it strange concerning this fiery Trial, wherewith the Lord is trying his Servants and People, and me in particular, 1 *Pet.* iv. 12. O for Grace to count it *all Joy when we fall into divers Temptations*, Jam. i. 2.

I say, I desire Grace to keep me from fainting in the Day of Adversity, by being strong, or strengthened with the Grace that is in Christ Jesus; and however I may be despised by some, as in 1 *Chron.* xv. 29. Michal, the Daughter of Saul, looked out at a Window, and saw King David dancing and playing; and she despised him in her Heart; or rashly judged by others, as in 1 *Sam.* xvii. 28. And Eliab was very angry with David, and said, *Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few Sheep*

Sheep in the Wilderness? I know thy Pride, and the Naughtiness of thine Heart, for thou art come down that thou mightest see the Battle. I say, however I may be despised, or rashly judged, either by Disciples or Ministers of Jesus Christ, yet my Witness and Record is above, that, through Grace, I have done what I could, in my Station, for the Peace and Welfare of *Jerusalem*, which I desire to prefer to my chiefest Joy, come what will.

All I shall say at present anent their rash judging, shall be, what Christ said to the Disciples, when judging rashly and harshly of the Woman who anointed his Feet, *John xii. 7. Mat. xxvi. 10. Let her alone, Why trouble ye the Woman?* I say, Let alone, and beware of judging another Man's Servant; but remember, that to my own Master I stand or fall; and *he is such a Master*, whose Favour I would not forfeit for the Favour or Pleasure of none, whether godly or graceless, great or small. Oh that our Hearts were saying unto the Lord, *Truly I am thy Servant, I am thy Servant.* Methinks our Hearts should say to Christ, as *Abigail* said to *David*, *1 Sam. xxv. 41. Let me be a Servant, to wash the Feet of the Servants of my Lord.* Oh that Folk knew Christ! I say, If they knew this Gift of God, and who it is that is in their Offer, they would certainly love and embrace him, notwithstanding of all the Faults and Failings that are to be found among his Servants, and Disciples; for which Faults and Failings we may blush and be ashamed, both before Christ and the World: And so much the more may we blush, when the same is told in *Gath*, and published in the Streets of *Askelon*, making the Daughters of the uncircumcised to rejoice and triumph.

I remember that when Christ asked his Disciples, What it was they were disputing about by the Way? It is said, They held their Peace; as being ashamed to tell him; and no wonder, for by the Way they had contended who should be greatest, *Mark ix. 33, 34.* I wish there be not too much of this Spirit in our present Contendings.

Object. It is reported, That the Seceders in *Perth* and *Edinburgh*, are resolved to set their Ministers to the Door, and not to receive them further into their House, which they have built for publick Worship.

Answer. Whatever may be said this Way, or whatever just Ground they have so to do, yet I am certain that hitherto they have done no such Thing.

But

But, if our Ministers, whom we love, and desire to honour, do bring in any new Doctrine or Discipline, any new or unprecedented Constitution or Acts, or new Terms of Communion, without showing us either Precept or Example from the Word of God, or our Presbyterian Principles or Constitution, for the same; then we are expressly commanded not to *receive them into our House*, or bid them *God speed*, lest we *partake with them in their Sin*, 2 John x. 11. And, as we account and adhere to it as our Duty, to encourage and strengthen our Ministers Hands, in the faithful and diligent Exercise of their Ministerial Office; so we likewise account it our Duty to withstand them to the Face, Gal. ii. 11. in the sinful or disorderly Exercise of their said Office. Shall we, for Peace sake, call that which is evil good, or that which is wrong right? Wo to them that do so, Isa. v. 20.

We have been guilty of overvaluing our Ministers, and have esteemed them more highly for their Gifts, than for their Master's sake, or for their Works sake; for which Cause the Lord is now rebuking us, because we gave not him the Glory due unto his Name. Also the above undue Estimation of them, has been a Mean, it may be feared, of puffing them up with Pride or Self-will, of which we now see the bitter Fruits, by their usurping, Prelatick-like, a Negative over the Majority of their Sessions. Are they not in this Respect, building again what they profess to destroy, viz. absolute or arbitrary Church Power, or a lordly or magisterial Dominion over us or over our Faith?

I marvel to see Ministers or People so soon shaken in Mind, either by Words, or new-fashioned Constitutions, or Acts, or Epistles. We use to say, A hasty made Marriage is a sudden Mischief; which often proves true, to the sad Experience of those concerned. For my own Part, I am afraid to meddle with such as are given to such sudden and unprecedented Changes and Acts. I do not love such a Moon-light Flitting of Synod; one would thought this was not the Work of a Day, let be a Piece of Midnight or Moonlight Work. Neither do I think it decent or orderly, especially for Church Judicatories, to have such long or unseasonable Sederunts, whereby they weary one another, in some Measure, out of their Time and Judgment.

Object. It is alledged by some, That our present Opposition

fition to the new-fashioned Constitution and Acts of Synod, proceeds from Love to, or Desire after the World, or the sweet Fruits of Burgesfship, as some call it.

Ans^w. Tho' some have the Assurance or Confidence to speak and reproach us at this Rate, yet I would ask them, or those Burgesfles who have sworn the said Oath, and now count it sinfull; I say, I would ask them, *What do they more than others*, who count the said Oath lawful? Do they deny so much as a Threed or Shoe-latchet, more than others? Or do they part with or restore any of the said sweet Fruits which they have gained by their said Burgesfship? Or do they resolve not to merchandize or trade as formerly? If they did this, Men might think they had ground to say they were not so worldly as other Men, or other Burgesfles.

Likewise, it is evident from the Act of Synod anent the said Oath, that it would not take one Farthing out of our Pocket, to go all the Length the Synod there requires; How then can it be said, That our testifying against the said new Constitution and Acts, proceeds from Love to, or Desire after the World? I wish that those, who speak as above, would take more heed to their Words, and Mind, that they must give an Account of all their hard or unjust Speeches.

There are three Things that make this Act of Synod, anent the religious Clause of some Burgesf Oaths, *to take* with the serious or simple, who are ready to believe every Word.

First, It has a Shew of Zeal and Strictness.

Secondly, It has a Shew of being denied to the World, or worldly Privileges, tho', as we said, it does not call Burgesfles, who are already concerned in the said Oath, to forego one Farthing, either of the World, or worldly Privileges, whatever Cost or Trouble new Burgesfles may be at, by their declining to swear the said Oath; and, in my View, 'tis unfair to lay this Burden on their Shoulders, while Burgesfles, who count the said Oath sinful, *touch not the said Burden*, that their young Brethren may be oppressed with, *with one of their Fingers*.

Thirdly, This Act is carried on by zealous Ministers, whom we have Ground to believe would not desire to do a wrong Thing, or forbid us to do a lawful Thing; yet Ministers, and Disciples of Jesus Christ, may be very far mistaken in the Exercise of their Zeal, as might easily be

be shown, and may be seen, *Luke ix. 49, 50, 54, 55* above, and other notour Instances which might be named

For my own Part, tho' it may be made evident, that the Burgess-Oath is lawful, yet I would not judge it expedient at present, tho' I had a Call, to swear it; far less do I think it my Duty, at present, to break off Communion with those Ministers, or People of the Secession, who count the said Oath lawful.

Upon the whole, let not a graceless or lukewarm Generation rejoice, or bless themselves in our present Divisions, accounting themselves happy while careless, or at Ease in Zion; their State is more dangerous than they are aware: *For if Judgment begin at the House of God, what shall the End be of them that obey not the Gospel? And if these Things be done in the green Tree, what shall be done in the dry?*

F I N I S.

